

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the instant application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently Amended) A method for ~~enabling phone users of~~ bridging a teleconferencing system to ~~participate in an instant messaging based conference managed by and~~ an instant messaging system, comprising the steps of:

providing a ~~speech processing system coupled~~ device serving as a bridge between said teleconferencing system and said messaging system, the device being directly coupled between the teleconferencing system and the instant messaging system or coupled between the teleconferencing system and the instant messaging system via a data network, the device being configured to convert a speech input into a text message or a text message into a speech output;

receiving at said ~~speech processing system~~ device a speech input received by said teleconferencing system from a telephone connected to the teleconferencing system;

transcribing the speech input to a first text message by the device ~~using said speech processing system;~~

transmitting the first text message to a plurality of instant messaging devices participating in ~~the an~~ instant messaging based conference managed by the instant messaging system;

receiving at ~~said speech processing system~~ the device a second text message from any one among the plurality of instant messaging devices participating in the instant messaging based conference;

converting the second text message to a speech output; and

transmitting the speech output to ~~the telephone~~ via a plurality of telephones participating in a teleconference managed by the teleconferencing system.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of converting the second text message further comprises the step of using a simulated voice print of the user associated with any one among the plurality of instant messaging devices to provide the speech output with a personalized voice output at the ~~telephone~~ telephones.

3. (Cancelled).

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the method further comprises the step of translating the first text message to another language to provide a translated first text message.

5. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:  
prior to said step of receiving a speech input, identifying a user associated with said telephone;

prior to said converting step, translating the second text message to another language to provide a translated second text message for subsequent speech output, wherein said another language is specified by a profile associated with said identified user associated with said telephone.

6. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of transmitting the first text message comprises the step of transmitting a text stream.

7-19. (Cancelled).